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How To Get Teachers To Attend Tech Training

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Dec 1, 2006

URL: <http://www.techlearning.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=196513431>

from Educators' eZine

Build it (your tech training seminars) and sometimes they (your teachers) will *not* come, unless you find ways to make it productive, personalized, and rewarding.

One of the major objectives for Technology Coordinators every year is how to involve teachers in staff development when there is so little extra time in a teacher's schedule. Over the last three years, I have implemented various plans that have increased the use of technology by teachers in my school. I am going to list the activities/tips that I found to be most worthwhile. My vision, as I train, is to make more teachers dependent on themselves and each other and less dependent on the Technology Coordinator, as they integrate technology.

1. In September, send out a simple survey of five questions asking teachers to indicate the areas of training in which they are interested. The survey could look like this chart that encourages staff to reply in a simple and quick manner. Give it out on Tuesday with a deadline of Friday so that you have a document with valuable information to aid in planning.

1. What are your individual technology goals for this year?
2. What technology related to the Standards of Learning (SOLs) do you want to use, and how?
3. What training do you need to attain your goals?
4. How would you rate your comfort level in using technology in the classroom? (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced)
5. Circle the programs you are comfortable using. (List of all software follows.)

2. After entering the responses in a spreadsheet, sort by interest and offer short workshops that meet that interest. For example, if five teachers want to learn about *Kidspiration* (<http://www.inspiration.com/>), offer a workshop on that software knowing that at least five staff members will be present. In my case, usually attendance is from eight to fifteen. (See sample spreadsheet in figure 1.)
3. Keep the workshops **short**. If offered during the teachers' planning time, limit the duration to 20-30 minutes. If teachers know that they do not have to give up all of their planning time, they will come. Those that want to learn more in depth about the topic may stay longer.
4. Purchase or borrow new technology tools, such as a [Smart Board](#), a [Visual Presenter](#), a [Document Camera](#), a [Response system](#), and so on. Offer demonstrations on these tools and see if teachers are interested in the products. If so, buy one and start checking it out for use. As the use increases,

purchase more. Funds are available through grants, school budgets, PTAs, or donations. If the interest is high, it is more likely to get funding.

5. The Technology Coordinator does not have to provide all the training. Make arrangements for a company representative to present. Many companies are willing to give workshops after the product is purchased. Some companies offer workshops outside the building for a nominal fee.
6. Provide mini-workshops before teachers are required to be at school. If the interest in the topic is there, you will be amazed at the number in attendance. Much can be accomplished in 20 minutes — a new piece of software, tips on Word, tricks in PowerPoint, newsletter creation, Webpage creation and more.
7. Work with grade level teams. Set up a 15 minute session as part of the team meeting and demonstrate how to integrate technology into a content area such as a science or math Standard of Learning (SOL).
8. Look at the curriculum maps for each grade level. Email a list of relevant websites to team members as they are teaching that topic. Post Websites, Webquests, tips, and activities on the school electronic bulletin board if possible, such as *BlackBoard*. This is a great place for all teachers to share resources as well.
9. Set up a Website on the bookmarking site [portaportal](http://portaportal.com) that includes teachers' technology resources/tools as well as appropriate student Websites related to the curriculum. Portaportal is a free Website that many teachers use as a resource with their students. Using it as a training tool allows teachers to see its applicability to the classroom.
10. Don't try to do all the training yourself. Identify staff members who are familiar with different software so they can co-teach a workshop with you or share their knowledge with another teacher one-on-one. This is a great way for teachers to feel confident about technology. If you can teach someone else, you have mastered the topic.
11. Provide books with activities that teachers can use right away. For example, if a teacher is interested in students brainstorming a topic for language arts, an activities book on *Inspiration* might be just the thing. Handing a teacher a resource that has several ideas that are easy to adapt to a lesson is another way of supporting the integration of technology. Use activity books when planning with a teacher to help develop lessons quickly.
12. Be positive and aware. Visit the computer lab when classes are present. Observe and make helpful suggestions later. Plan with teachers to integrate technology into the curriculum before using the computers. An effective and simple outline for planning is:
 - Activities **before** technology use: _____
 - Activities **during** technology use: _____
 - Activities **after** technology use: _____

Figure 1: Spreadsheet Referenced in Question #2

Name	Tech Goals	SOL Related Tech	Training	Comfort Level	Software Comfortable Using

Mary S.	Computers as Centers	<i>AlphaSmarts</i> , Research	Software use	Beginner	<i>Word</i> , <i>Kidspiration</i>
John T.	<i>Kidspiration</i> , <i>AlphaSmarts</i>	Social Studies presentations of ancient locations	<i>united streaming</i>	Intermediate	<i>Word</i> , <i>Excel</i> , <i>PowerPoint</i>
Susan M.	Update website, more tech integration	LCD projector, <i>Smart Board</i>	<i>AlphaSmarts</i>	Advanced	<i>AppleWorks</i> , <i>Graph Club</i>
Tom D.	Create <i>PowerPoint</i> presentations based on content	Reading in content areas, Student quizzes online	<i>PowerPoint</i> for young students	Beginner	<i>Word</i> , <i>Kidspiration</i>
Joan H.	Use <i>BlackBoard</i> and <i>unitedstreaming</i> more	SOL review sites	Webpage creation	Intermediate	Publisher, <i>Graph Club</i> , <i>Kidspiration</i>
Ben H.	Use <i>unitedstreaming</i> with students	Publishing for students	Mini-sessions on software	Intermediate	<i>Kid Pix</i> , <i>Kidspiration</i> , <i>PowerPoint</i>
George A.	Webpage, <i>Kidspiration</i> , <i>Kid Pix</i>	<i>Graph club</i> for graphing	<i>PowerPoint</i> refresher	Advanced	<i>Word</i> , <i>Excel</i> , <i>AppleWorks</i>
Frank W.	Teach the basics of <i>PowerPoint</i>	Books - Word Processing, Publish student work	Review of <i>PowerPoint</i> and <i>Word</i>	Intermediate	<i>Word</i> , <i>Kidspiration</i> , <i>Kid Pix</i> , <i>TimeLiner</i>
Denise L.	Use more software, Webpage, <i>BlackBoard</i>	Write to communicate ideas	<i>AlphaSmarts</i>	Intermediate	<i>Excel</i> , <i>Easy Grade Pro</i> , <i>Inspiration</i>

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